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there are two intended for this purpose. One is for use when the breasts are painful because the child has died: 757 824

*Kavaninoa* (*Acanthaceae*).

Scrape the skin of the root and chew it with the betel-mixture. Spit the mash on to your hand and press it against the woman's breasts. Then scrape the skin off a branch of the same shrub and bury it under the bed on which the woman sleeps.

The other is used to mitigate pain in the breasts at the time of weaning:

*Bō* (a species of bracken, *Pteris*).

Rub the leaves between the hands, add lime, and massage the breasts.

There is no belief that suckling prevents conception, and this is definitely not the case. Lactation has nothing to do with the period of abstinence from sexual intercourse prescribed after child-birth. The child continues to take the breast long after this has been resumed. Basil Thompson says that with Fijian women, in spite of a prolonged period of suckling, 'menstruation often recommences at the 3rd or 4th month after parturition, and cohabitation, even at this early stage, often results in a second pregnancy' (1908, p. 177). So far as I am aware, the flux is not resumed so early in the women of Bougainville—at any rate some of the women I knew well, whose babies were a year or so old, told me that they had not yet begun to menstruate again since the birth. But the strict taboo enforcing abstinence from sexual intercourse for a period I estimate as at least two years after child-birth (see p. 156) ensures that a second pregnancy shall not follow very quickly. 853 841 [171]

Suckling is continued for four or five years—judging from the size and condition of some children who were still at the breast. But if another pregnancy occurs, the first child is weaned. A woman will never attempt to suckle both a baby and an elder child, as I have seen done by some American Indian women. 853 862

Weaning is, in the normal course of affairs, a gradual process, other food, beginning with taro, which is given from birth, being gradually increased in quantity and variety. The child, according to the statements of the women, makes, of its own account, fewer and fewer demands upon its mother, who accedes to them till they cease. There would seem, accordingly, to be no shock to 862

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881 688 754 knows how to 'make poison', and he will exercise his skill against the woman, so that she will shortly die.

881 514 The boys must have their only meal of the day early in the morning, before dawn. It is essential that they should have finished their meal before the women go out to relieve themselves, which they do as soon as dawn has broken; the fact that the boys are living a long way from the village is immaterial.

881 841 753 A woman who is menstruating may not cook taro for the novices, nor may any one else cook it in her hut. If this rule is broken the novices will become very ill, and will waste away till they are reduced to skin and bone. The taro must always be cooked while the children of the house are asleep. If a child cries while the taro is cooking, it must not be sent to the novices, or it would make them ill. While cooking for the boys a woman must stay in the hut all the time and watch the taro, she may not leave it even for a few moments for any reason whatever.

## THE *WAPI* CEREMONY

881 574 When the time for the *wapi* ceremony approaches, word is sent round to a large number of villages within walking distance, inviting the men to attend. Enormous quantities of food must be provided for the visitors, for if the amount available is insufficient, serious trouble will ensue.

If there are a number of boys ready, and a sufficiency of food, a *wapi* ceremony may be held even if there are, in the villages constituting the group, boys waiting for the *watawutʃ*. But no *wapi* can take place for a long time after the final ceremony (*wasipsip*) at which the hair is cut off. Boys who are of an age to put on the *upi* during such a period must wait.

The first of the two opportunities I had of witnessing the *wapi* ceremony occurred only a few days after I had taken up my residence at the village of Kurtatchi. Owing to some quarrel, the details of which I could not understand, no one from this village attended the ceremony, though they were apparently invited, as I was asked by several people why they had not come. It was held for the boys of the Hahon villages in the mountains between Soraken and Kunua. I received news of it from Mrs. Hadden, whose plantation hands had asked permission to attend.

After crossing the bay, we started inland from the coast near Soraken Plantation, being joined at intervals by crowds from other

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881 happened, and asks her: 'You are bleeding, aren't you?' The girl does not speak, she is afraid, but she nods her head. Her mother asks her: 'Did you see the blood when you got up this morning?' Then her mother tells the other women: 'The girl has broken.' All the women are glad. They call out, and jump about, and shout, and say: 'By-and-by we shall eat a big pig, and have a dance.' They are all glad about the girl, and as they go to work they talk about her, and are pleased.

The girl's mother gives her a little taro, secretly, saying to her: 'You eat it up quickly and don't let any one see you do it.' After [262] that she must go hungry, she must not eat any more. She is forbidden to eat taro, coco-nuts, bananas, pig, or fish, and she must not drink. All that she can have is a kind of areca-nut, which is not strong, and has water in it, so that it moistens her tongue. [624] (This is not the kind of areca-nut which is usually chewed, but a smaller variety, called *gagmorat*, *gag* = drink.)

881 Two children keep her company and go hungry along with her. 784 They must belong to her clan. Both must be too young to men- 621 struate. The girl's mother, father, brothers and sisters (blood and 565 classificatory), and grandparents do not eat either. For a commoner this is enough, but for a girl who is *tsunaun* all the village goes hungry. This fast goes on for about two days, until a certain part of the ceremony is over.

881 When the girl's mother goes to draw water in the evening, she must take all the water-coco-nuts (see p. 289) and hide them in another hut. If she does not want to do this, she must pour away all the water that is not used immediately. If she left any of it in [841] the hut, the girl might steal some and drink it, and that would be very bad for her, for then her blood would flow all the time and would not dry up. The two children who are keeping the girl company may drink a little secretly, without letting the girl see them, and they may eat a little taro also in the same way. After two days the girl may eat a little specially prepared taro, which her mother brings to her secretly, and may drink a very little water, enough to make her tongue cold.

[565] The girl and her two companions must stay inside the hut for five days and nights. If she is a commoner four will be enough. She must sit all the time doing nothing, and must not leave the hut at all except to relieve herself. When this is necessary she puts on a hood, and goes no farther than the back of the hut. One of the

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pudding and pieces of pig, and rub them on to their genitals, and then on one another's mouths, with the secretion from the vulva adhering to them. The women are obliged to eat these pieces. If any one refuses she is held down, her mouth forced open, and the food pushed into it.

When the women have had enough of this sexual play, the visiting women are all given quantities of food to take back with them. They then disperse to their own villages. The whole of this part of the ceremony, involving the banana palm, is performed only for persons of rank.

The three children, i.e. the girl for whom the ceremony is being performed, the one who acted as 'opossum girl', and her other companion, remain inside the hut for a few days more. The exact period was not specified; my informants said it did not matter very much. They may now eat taro which has been roasted in the embers or cooked in an oven, but not that which has been boiled in a pot. They may not eat the meat of a green coco-nut, but they may break open ripe ('dry') coco-nuts and cook them in the embers like taro, then scrape the meat off them; this they may eat. (In the ordinary way the meat of a coco-nut at this stage is not considered fit to eat.) If the girl who has been menstruating eats green coco-nuts or taro that has been boiled in water, she will have another period in a short time, and will lose too much blood. The same prohibition applies to taro leaves, which these people are accustomed to boil and eat as we eat spinach. These are liable to have the same effect, being cooked in water, but the leaves may be made into a package tied up with covering leaves, and roasted in the embers; in this form, since they are cooked dry, she is permitted to eat them. But she is absolutely forbidden to eat pig, fish, or opossum, which amounts to the prohibition of all flesh foods.

When a few days have passed, the girl's mother prepares a special pot of taro, called *pipiro*. One *roran* (six tubers) of each of several different kinds of taro is taken and boiled in a pot with certain aromatic leaves. Taro thus prepared is esteemed a great delicacy. The men go fishing, and bring in certain kinds of fish. The names of fourteen kinds of fish were given to me in this connexion. They were all rather small fish, so far as I could ascertain. No reason could be elicited for choosing these particular kinds. They are brought into the village; the girl's mother wraps them up in the large leaves of the bush banana, which are much used in

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horse-play with them, jumping over them and pulling them about, but there was nothing that could be called playing at sexual intercourse. This part of the ceremony had to be modified on account of the approaching *watawutf*.

The second *kōbū* was put on the ledge just inside the door at the men's end of the hut, and all the men present drank from it, both the two who were inside the hut and those who remained outside at the *tagoan*. When all had drunk, it was filled up with more coco-nut milk, poured through the bundle as before, and the contents were then poured into half-coco-nut shells, with the meat still in them. These were sent to Pinari, who was not present. Coco-nuts were also filled from the *kōbū* out of which the women had drunk, and these were sent to a group of women with babies who were sitting at the women's end of the hut and on the women's verandah.

Nawi wore a hood with a pattern worked on it in fibre. All the women still had cordyline leaves tucked into cane girdles, which they wore over their loin-cloths. The leaves were allowed to hang down, either in front or at both sides. Nawi wore hers in front, under her loin-cloth, which she had resumed; over it she had several girdles of red cane. I was also given cordyline leaves, and asked to wear them in my belt, with the earnest request that I should not throw them away afterwards. They said it would be all right for me to press the leaves and keep them in my box, which I did. Those worn by the other women were to be put up in the rafters of the hut, together with the *kōbū* used to contain the drinking mixture, and dried in the smoke which is constantly rising from the smouldering fire on the floor of the hut. This hardening of the *kōbū* and cordyline leaves is to ensure that Nawi's flux will not occur again too quickly. When she is married, her mother will prepare some ceremonial pudding, of which all the women will partake, and the leaves and the *kōbū* will then be thrown into the sea.

Nawi tells me that her flow has finished. Since its onset was announced on Friday morning, it has lasted two days and two nights, or possibly three nights, if it began early in the night of Thursday–Friday.

When all the men and women present had drunk some of the mixture out of the *kōbū*, Nawi was given a basket of roast taro cut into thin slices, each slice smeared thickly with *owan* on both sides, and a little packet of taro leaves, cooked in the embers. She ate

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the mixture, the good properties of the leaves and roots, &c., are supposed to be carried into the liquid which runs into the *taraki* and the *kōbū*. This liquid is of a red colour, owing to the *owan* (impure iron oxide) which was plentifully sprinkled over the package before the coco-nut milk was poured through. It tastes bitter, probably because of the *owan*, since the liquid, being cold, could hardly act as an infusing agent during the short time it is in contact with the leaves and roots in the package, so as to acquire any properties from them.

When sufficient liquid has been poured through, the package is fastened up again and placed in the rafters of the hut over the fire. Two immature coco-nuts (*kukuts*) are put beside it. It must dry well in the smoke. This is another precaution to 'harden the girl's belly' to prevent her from menstruating again too quickly. When the girl sleeps with her husband for the first time, her mother takes down the package and the coco-nuts, and slashes the two immature coco-nuts open; this represents the 'opening of the girl' in order that she may become pregnant. The package and the coco-nuts are then thrown away into the sea by the mother, who must take care that the current carries them away immediately. This removes their restraining influence over the girl's flow of blood, so that she will have plenty to make a child. If for any reason the girl's mother considers that it is not desirable for her daughter to have a child soon, the package and the coco-nuts are left in the rafters until such time as pregnancy is desired.

The liquid which has been poured through the package into the *taraki* and the *kōbū* must be tasted by all present. The women drink from the *taraki* and the men from the *kōbū*. When every one has had a taste the rest of the liquid is put by in coco-nuts for those who are not present. A woman will save some for her husband, and a man for his wife and children. Little girls who are *tsunaun* cannot drink; they must taste it for the first time when the ceremony is performed on their behalf. Little girls who are commoners get their share with the other people; none will be prepared for them when they begin to menstruate. The coco-nuts in which the mixture is carried to other huts must be carefully kept in the rafters of those huts, and thrown into the sea at the same time as the package of leaves and roots. The belts of coloured cane worn by the girl during the period are rolled up and encased in a covering of fibre, and placed with the other things in the rafters of her

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and in the ceremony as I saw it, the time during which the girl remained in her mother's hut was only five days. But in discussion, informants told me that she used to remain in her mother's hut for one month after the first discovery of the flux. At Saposa, also, the longer interval was given.

At Saposa there is a further elaboration. A wooden figure, life-size or larger, is carved out of soft wood, to represent a girl ornamented as she would be for this ceremony, with her hair dressed and painted, and a tortoise-shell filigree ornament round her neck. The pattern of the cicatrization on her body is also indicated. This figure is kept in her mother's hut during the period of her seclusion. It appears also at her wedding. One such figure, which I saw during a brief visit to Saposa, had been made for a girl who had died; it was to be burnt after a suitable interval with other of her belongings (Pl. 32).

## WOMEN'S VIEWS ON MENSTRUATION

The reason given by the natives for holding the ceremony above described is one which I have not seen put forward elsewhere, namely, to ensure that the girl does not menstruate too frequently or too freely. All the details of the ritual appeared to be directed towards this end, e.g. avoidance of drinking any liquid or eating taro boiled in water during the period of the flux, the use of hard-timbered trees in the preparation of the appropriate mixture to be drunk by all, including the girl herself, at one stage of the proceedings, and the preservation in the rafters of the hut of the package containing the roots and leaves from which this mixture is prepared, to be hardened by the smoke, and thrown away when a child is desired. In all discussions arising out of the ceremony, and from several different informants, this was the only explanation that was forthcoming, and I see no reason to doubt its validity.

The usual duration of the menstrual period *irir* (*ira* = blood) among these women would appear to be three days per month. No one reported a semi-monthly period. A few told me that they had it for one or two days only. One case of five days was reported indirectly; I was also told that the woman in question was not in the habit of taking any of the medicines for controlling the flux which appear to be in universal use. Since data of this sort cannot be checked by personal observation, and in view of the vagueness of all these people in regard to any question of time, I feel no great

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145 841 confidence in the accuracy of this information, and merely give it as the best I could get. Menstrual disturbances would appear to be rare. Only one of the women I questioned on the subject admitted to pain at the period, but all were unanimous in voting it a nuisance, and nearly all said that they shortened its duration, or caused it to be omitted for one, two, or three months by taking some of the numerous medicines. They assured me that the omission was not followed by any harmful consequences.

841 824 Eight different plants were brought to me as being useful for this purpose, and I think it likely that this list is far from complete. Unfortunately, most of them could not be identified from my pressed specimens. The following, however, are known to the authorities at Kew Gardens: *kakariuk* (*Selaginella flabellata*), *ſip-ſip* (*Pteris ensiformis*), *tatsir* (*Menispermacea*, variety indeterminable). The procedure is the same in every case. While the flow is in progress, the root is chewed with the betel-mixture; some of this mash is swallowed, the rest is spat on to the hand and rubbed over the abdomen, generally by the woman herself, but sometimes by another person. It is noteworthy that the purpose of all of these was expressly stated to be that of lessening the flow or shortening its duration. None was mentioned as useful in cases where menstruation is accompanied by pain, which supports the statement of the women that this condition is rare.

It does not seem likely that all of the plants which are supposed to control the flux do, in fact, possess any astringent or other properties which would render them effective as a uterine haemostatic, though some of them may do so. The only relevant analysis I have been able to find is that of a variety of *Menispermaceae* (*Jateorhiza palmata*), the root of which contains columbin, berberine, and columbic acid. This is used in Africa and in India as a cure for dysentery and other affections of the bowels, and in Europe as a tonic (Dymock, p. 18).

It is easy to understand the woman's dislike of a lengthy menstrual period, especially as, apart from the inconvenience, it involves her in several irritating taboos. She must not prepare food for any man, including her husband, which means that she has to arrange for some one else to cook his meals. She must not go to work in the taro garden; if she did, pigs would eat the taro plants and the crop would be poor. She must not go in a *mon* (plank canoe) or a storm would arise and the canoe would capsize. She must not go

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●841 into the sea, either to fish or to wash, or she would spoil the fishing. Sexual intercourse is forbidden her until she has performed ceremonial ablutions in the sea after the flow has ceased. I think it probable that there are other taboos which have escaped my notice.

[184] Neither at Petats nor at Kurtatchi was it necessary for her to retire to a separate hut, but I am informed that this is customary in some parts of Buka.

There was a certain reticence observable in the demeanour of the women when I tried to investigate questions connected with menstruation, which was entirely absent from our discussions on sexual matters. It is possible that this may have been connected with the horror of menstrual blood shown by other primitive peoples, but I noticed that they were particularly chary of letting me know when they were themselves experiencing the flux, and since some of them were not very punctilious in observing the taboos, this may have been a factor in their reluctance. Perhaps I might have overcome it by greater persistence, but as I did not wish to alienate them, I did not press the matter. Most of the information was obtained while the subject was in their thoughts, on the occasion of the first menstruation ceremony described in the previous pages, which gave me a good excuse for discussing it.